



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Washington Building, 8th Floor
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-3402
(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237
www.dmme.virginia.gov

For Immediate Release

December 3, 2012

Contact: Mike Abbott (276) 523-8146

mike.abbott@dmme.virginia.gov

Virginia Coal Mine Safety Training Video Wins National Award

Big Stone Gap, VA – A coal mine safety video developed to train all underground coal miners, mine rescue teams, mine rescue trainers, and underground instructors in how to safely escape from an underground coal mine during an emergency has taken top honors in a national training materials competition, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) announced today.

The video, entitled “Lead the Way,” was produced by DMME and Alpha Natural Resources. It was awarded first place in the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), National Mine Health and Safety Academy’s 17th Annual Training Materials Competition. The video also won the competition’s Grand Prize, in recognition of being the Best Overall entry.

The purpose of the project was to develop a video that would demonstrate real, life-threatening situations that miners may be confronted with while attempting to escape from an underground mine emergency. “We wanted to show that miners, with proper training, have the knowledge, ability and presence of mind to make difficult decisions when confronted with an emergency escape situation,” said Carroll Green, Division of Mines Inspector Supervisor.

“Our two Alpha Southern Kentucky Division Mine Rescue Teams at Black Mountain were honored to assist DMME with the Lead the Way training video. We truly hope it makes a difference if a mine evacuation emergency were to occur,” said Ronnie Biggerstaff, Alpha’s Southern Kentucky Division Safety/Mine Rescue Coordinator.

DMME Division of Mines staff worked with representatives of Alpha Natural Resources’ Southern Kentucky Division and Alpha’s Black Mountain Resources and Black Mountain White and Blue mine rescue teams to put the video together. “We are grateful to Ronnie Biggerstaff;

M O R E

Chris Slone, President of Alpha's Black Mountain Resources; Donnie Thomas, the video's main character, also of Black Mountain Resources and a member of the White Team which won the National Mine Rescue Championship in 2011," said DMME's Division of Mines Chief, Randy Moore. "They worked closely with DMME's staff and Daniel Springen of Dirty Martini Productions, Inc., to tell an important story in a realistic manner to get our safety message across."

DMME employees who worked on the project included Division of Mines Chief, Randy Moore; Inspector Supervisor, Carroll Green; Administrative Program Specialist II, Becky Sanders; Mine Safety Engineer, Mike Willis; and Emergency Response Coordinator Chris Whitt.

Copies of "Lead the Way" are being distributed by DMME to all MSHA Grant Recipients, Mine Rescue Trainers, Instructors and colleges throughout the nation. Copies are available upon request to all interested parties; please contact Becky Sanders at (276) 523-8227 or via email at becky.sanders@dmme.virginia.gov. The project was funded through MSHA via the Brookwood Sago Grant.

DMME teamed with Daniel Springen and DMPI to produce two other safety videos, "The Right Choice" and "Step Up to the Plate" which were also awarded a Grand Prize in 2004 and First Place in 2006, respectively at MSHA's Annual Training Materials Competition. "The Right Choice" addressed continuous mining machine safety and "Step Up to the Plate," substance abuse in the work place.

#